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Rose Letter

AND PLANT RESEARCH REVIEW

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VICTORY FOOD AND FLOWER GARDENS

The call to again man Victory Gardens has come to America's gardeners just as imperatively as the call to produce more weapons for participation in the front lines.

Food is still the most potent weapon for the morale of the home front, and fortunately we can all do our share to keep an increasing supply of it.

The millions of new gardeners have themselves led the way for our Government agencies. With the guidance of the Government experts and the sincere and unselfish assistance of more experienced neighbors, hosts of our home folks have discovered the joy of growing things, and have had a sufficient supply of vitamins and real food at a time when the authorities were much concerned over the prospects of shortages from the regular sources of supply.

The home gardeners are to be greatly applauded for their zeal, not only in growing the food but also in the stupendous task of correctly preserving and storing the surpluses.

Many of the millions are now, with the encouragement and blessings of the authorities at Washington, adding flowers to their planting plans. Garden plots are producing beauty as well as food, and borders and beds and lawns around the homes, are being brightened up to a much greater extent than ever before in the history of the country.

Gardening is no longer the special interest of the few larger homes, but has swept the country and has become the great hobby of many.

The boys returning from the far distant and exotic countries will find a more beautiful America, and their pleasant home grounds colorful and well cared for just as they dreamed about them when away.

This has been an unusual winter, twice the early winter vegetable crops of the South were destroyed by adverse weather conditions. The snowfall in the Northern states has been almost stifling, so much so, that for periods of many weeks no express or freight shipments could be moved. Although fuel and farm feed has been critical, in our own area cattle and chicken feed was delivered to marooned farmers by plane, not once has any reference been made to a shortage of food for the general public.

A great deal of credit for this can be taken by the Victory Gardeners who had reserves of their own and whose unselfish labors permitted the small percentage of the commercially processed foods available to civilians to go to those who had no gardens.

NOTICE: The Rose Letter is published at intervals and sent without charge to prominent Rosarians, Editors, Writers and leading Horticulturists. Others, \$1.00 annually. The object of this letter is to give the results of tests in our Research Gardens, and to digest the rose news of America and many foreign countries in which Jackson & Perkins has connections. Material may be reprinted without credit. We would appreciate tear sheets. Photographs of many varieties are available on request.

The call to arms thus repeats itself to all Victory Gardeners, and the gardeners can go back to their labors with the feeling of a job well done and an added impetus to repeat the fine performance.

MORE FOOD

The shortage of manpower, equipment and transportation was an important threat toward the decreased commercial production of many food items. The horticultural interests as a whole lent great assistance and the nurseries of Jackson & Perkins Company last year led the way with a banner production of fresh vegetables and other foods.

Over 350 acres of tomatoes helped to supply much tomato juice and many cases of canned tomatoes. Fifty acres of potatoes, one hundred acres of beets and carrots, one hundred twenty acres of peas for canning, seventy-five acres of beans and several hundred of cereal crops all helped swell the food supplies. This, of course, was additional to large production of fruit and nut trees for the future.

Naturally as great an effort as this occasioned considerable disruption of general production schedules and even though Herculean efforts were made to produce roses, shrubs and perennials, the production of food, the drafting of much of the skilled labor and the unusual drought all combined in the formation of one of the smallest crops in history. Yet even though the flowering plants are less plentiful the food crops were good and there is great promise of extra plants for the flower gardens for next year.

SPRING TRIMMING OF ROSES

There are many schools of thought on spring trimming of roses and, of course, a winter discussion drops almost into the sphere of the now popular armchair strategists.

We in the colder part of the country need not consider the very high pruning too seriously for unless we actually spend almost unlimited amounts of time completely covering our plants with soil, the winter freezes will take our plants down to or just above the normal covering line.

Mrs. Harriett Foote, the loved and eminent rosarian of Marblehead, Massachusetts, has an immense compost pile in her garden which she uses each year to protect the tops of her roses. She, with this ardent care, has rose bushes in her stern climate equal to those in the balmier coastal areas of Oregon and Washington. But that is not for the roses of Mr. Smith and Mr. Jones. The present trend of all gardening is to make it as simple as possible, always retaining the idea of maximum production of growth and flowers and a minimum of unusual care.

With that in mind, we proceed to remove our top cover of hay, straw or leaves after the danger of real frosts is over, for the ground underneath is frozen and must be thawed out before the hilled up soil can be removed.

The climbers, which have been removed from the trellises or posts and stretched on the ground, are trimmed before being replaced on their supports. If the wood is too thick some of the older basal shoots should be removed and then all laterals should be brought in two or three eyes from the main stems. These clipped laterals will later produce much larger and more perfect clusters of blooms. If the plant is too tall or the runners too long they should be cut to the desired height before raising it to the support. In bringing the plant up to a post care should be taken not to bunch the stems too much. Of course, on a trellis or other support the whole plant may be nicely spread for a more gorgeous display.

All of the above should take place before the new shoots are too long, thus as few as possible are injured during the operation.

The climbers, being off the ground, the Hybrid Teas and Floribundas are the next consideration. Since the hilled soil is undoubtedly thawed by now, it must be removed in order to properly trim any injured branches. The Floribunda roses are naturally more hardy than the Hybrid Teas and there is less injury to the tops of most of them. Depending on the height of the bush desired these may be trimmed from 12 inches up to several feet high. As in the climbers, take out the light wood and cut the laterals in to a few eyes from the main stems. This method of pruning will give a massive display of bloom from the older wood, followed by new bottom breaks which prolong the blooming period for many weeks and which serve as the means of keeping fresh blooming shoots coming all summer.

The Hybrid Teas in the colder areas will need to have all the heavy wood preserved that is not injured. In other more gentle climates, experience will indicate the most practical heights — from 12 inches to 2 feet on younger bushes and higher on older plants. Here again the weaker and the side shoots should be intelligently removed or trimmed.

The plants in the colder areas will first need to be trimmed to a good eye below winter injury. Sometimes it is necessary to go to the crown of the plant for this, but more frequently nice firm stems are found above the hilling. If these latter are healthy, they may be left from 8 to 12 inches high — with again the weak branches trimmed out and the laterals trimmed in.

If the plants are not pruned too severely, the earlier growth thus obtained encourages greater root action and earlier production of the heavier bottom canes which eventually supply most of the season's flowers.

The proper time to prune is thus, early spring after the worst freezes are over. However, it must be done before the buds are advanced too far. For if the buds at the tips of the branches become too large, when they are cut off, they will have absorbed a great deal of the material stored by the plant for its spring start and it will take a much longer time for the plant to readjust itself with a resultant lesser bush.

Good pruning shears, some twine for the climbers and a little bending will finish this simple spring operation quickly and will give the plants the all important early start towards a big summer of bloom.

HYBRID TEA ROSE, GREY PEARL

Plant Patent Applied For

The Rose Grey Pearl brings a color entirely new and different to the Modern Rose World. In the distant past, way back in 1838, a horticultural magazine described its possible forefathers but the relationship is distant and devious if it has any bearing at all. They described two roses of that time. "Coronation is one of those purple shaded roses inclined to slate — Chetalaine is a hybrid Bourbon rose dun colored, finely shaped and very good."

This modern grey rose has an exquisitely formed flower and the buds too are delightful.

The general effect of the open flower is a dove-grey, at times there is a feeling of lavender tinged with pink and the short inner petals show a trace of tan. The bud and half open flowers are almost brown during many periods of the spring and summer, so much so that arrangements and corsages blend beautifully with colored fabrics of deep tan and pastel rose.

The bush is healthy and vigorous and reaches about 30 inches in height. The disease-resistant foliage is a shiny dark green.

Originated by McGredys in Ireland, this rose was first brought to the United States just before the war. It has been observed and tested in all parts of the country since then and has consistently proved to be a good grower. Grey Pearl and its progeny are going to give rose enthusiasts an entirely new field of color exploration and will be of interest for years to come.

PERENNIALS

Altho roses have been the first favorites of many ballots carried on in past years by garden magazines, perennials are a close second.

Just as rose plants were carried across the country by the early settlers, so were also roots and seeds of garden favorites carried across the country to give us the old gardens of our forefathers.

Today, in contrast to the few varieties so transported, there is such a vast amount of colorful material available that anyone can have a perennial garden to suit their fancy and should be able to have just the types of blooms and colors in their gardens that they would like to have.

Should it be a dominantly blue garden, the Forget-Me-Not Anchusa makes a gay start in spring; the White Candytuft is a pleasant companion. Soon after, the Polenomium Blue Pearl gives a lovely mass of airy azure blue blooms not too high, about 18 inches, but at least that wide also. The Campanula Carpatica Blue Carpet brings something new in that family with its compact plants and its continuous flowers. The Veronica Spicata Crater Lake Blue follows closely with its delicate spires of rich deeper blue and, of course, the Delphiniums Enchantment and Delightful add their summer charm.

The fall asters start another display of blue with the lovely starlike Aster Frikarti, which gives billows of perfect blue flowers from August to frost, then come the blue dwarfs and the taller blue forms like to give a showing of blue to the very end of the season.

Another group which has some lovely blue blooms is the *Viola* family and this year a mammoth purple blue perennial form joined the parade of blues. Purple Heart, the new *Viola*, blooms from spring until the first snows fall and the blooms bravely punctuate the pure white. It is bound to become a favorite — and if the rampant runners are clipped close to the plant in August, the masses of long stemmed blooms will be a point of admiration in any garden the full fall period.

Other colors too may be carried thru in a similar manner for the new improved types of perennials are a boon for both the new comer and the old time professional.

VIOLA PURPLE HEART **Plant Patent Applied For**

Something outstanding and new comes to the perennial world in the form of the Giant *Viola* Purple Heart. A seedling of the older *Beauty of Larone*, and the prolific *Jersey Gem*, this hardy perennial *Viola* is absolutely the largest flowered variety yet offered and with its seven to eight inch stems, also the longest stemmed.

The three inch deep Violet Purple blooms are most unusual and as effective in early spring as they are in late fall when they successfully brave the chill of the first snow.

From general reports thruout the country, the plant does well everywhere except in the extremes of moist or dry heat. It does not care for too rich a soil and starts sending out runners soon after planting. In early August, the runners are best clipped in to five or six inches. The plants then send up a mass of flowers which continue until freezing stops all growth.

In the very heart of the velvety sheened rich purple blooms, there is a small golden yellow eye, the only variation in the color.

The plant may be used in a low border, as an edging, as a permanent carpet planting and in many other ways, for like all *Violas*, it is always gay and lively.

POLEMONIUM BLUE PEARL

Early spring flowers are much desired and those that can be depended on for a mass bloom over a rather long period are doubly welcome.

One of this group is the exquisite new *Polemonium Blue Pearl*. With its myriads of tiny light blue flowers produced in umbel-shaped heads, this plant blooms thruout May and June and frequently has five or six stems forming heads at one time.

It blooms with the Iris and Bleeding Hearts and when finished resolves itself into a tuft of dark green fernlike foliage about 8 inches high. The composite leaves are themselves interesting and decorative. The spring bloom height is 15 to 18 inches.

Blue Pearl not only is outstanding in garden decorations, where it likes a good loam soil, but cuts well and keeps beautifully in the house.

CHRYSANTHEMUM SEPTEMBER DAWN

Last fall was an ideal Chrysanthemum year and many people who realized their true worth for the first time are this year planning on a much wider use. To those who do not have room in their borders due to spring and summer successions, these plants may be placed in the kitchen garden and when the buds are set, picked up with a clump of soil and moved to the display garden.

The Lavender Lady type of Chrysanthemum has become one of the prime favorites of Chrysanthemum enthusiasts. The individual flowers are large, beautifully formed and keep very well either in the garden or when cut.

An important addition to this group is September Dawn which brings the gorgeous deep pink color of an autumn dawn.

The plant is sturdy, hardy and a most pleasing color. It grows about 2½ feet tall and starts blooming the end of September.

VERONICA SPICATA CRATER LAKE BLUE

The Veronicas are a versatile family, some shining in rock gardens, others as edge plants and still others as medium tall plants for the border.

Veronica Crater Blue Lake belongs in the latter category, with its slender spikes of the lovely clear blue color of the far-famed Crater Lake. The foliage is a dark rich green and the plant reaches an over-all height of about 20 inches. The delicate spikes carry a feeling of airiness and grace whether in the garden or used as a cut flower.

Planted either in full sunlight or partial shade, this lovely Veronica is well worth a spot in the border.

Many varieties of your favorite roses are not going to be available this year. Many of the men who helped produce these plants in past years are now serving our country in far parts of the world.

Our production of foods is taking a great part of the time of those left behind. We are gladly joining in all of the war efforts and are asking our many friends to be patient with us, and if they cannot get some favorite variety this spring to try again next fall when we hope to be able to offer a balanced list of the country's favorite roses.

ES Boerner